

A

REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Tuesday July, 25. 1710

I Must Pursue my Arguments on the African Trade, because I think it is as useful a branch of Discourse, as any this Paper can be Employ'd — As the Trade itself is as Useful, Profitable, and Improving a Trade, as any we can drive ; I am very sorry to find People so fond of, as well as busie, in the Wretched Prosecution of our Feuds, Heats, and Divisions ; that Things thus in their Place, equally Necessary, and of equal Concern to both Parties, should seem Foreign, and not to the Purpose.

But as I desire to speak to every useful Thing, and that in its proper Season ; I choole to go on, without Enquiring whether some People had not rather have me

talk of something besides : every Thing has its proper Season to be spoken of, and watching those Seasons in every Subject, is what alone, makes what is at any time spoken, *be to the Purpose* : If the thing was not now on the Stage, it might be ask'd, *Why do you Trouble us with it now ?* But 'tis this very NOW, that brings me to talk — 'Tis NOW, just NOW that the Trade to Africa should and must be spoken to ; he that has any thing to say for or against them, ought now to speak, or for ever after to hold his Tongue.

'Tis NOW, the Enemies to the Company push all possible Extremities upon them, to the hazard not so much of the Company, for that is not my Concern, as of the TRADE, 'Tis

'Tis NOW the Trade lies a Bleeding Land
the Company languishing between the
Presures, and doubtful uncertain Circumstances, of disputed Creditors,
Politick, I might rather say Impolitick
Enemies, common Trading, Discouragements by War, Loss and Casualty,
and above all, insuperable Delays
in all the Offers and Attempts, made
to recover them,

'Tis NOW, the TRADE Ingulph'd in
all these Difficulties, lies like a Man
under Water, just strangling, the
stronger he struggles to recover, the
sooner he is Drown'd ; and unless im-
mediately, and just NOW snatch'd up,
it must irrecoverably be lost.

'Tis NOW, the Encroaching Rivals of
our Trade flourish, and making the
Advantage of our Disorders, Engross
the Trade, Encrease upon the Coast,
and to our shame and disgrace, run a-
way with those Advantages, that we
have no hands to take hold of, and
which if we had, as we ought to have,
our Share of, the Company would soon
revive, and need ask no help to
pay their Debts, or any Favour of
their Creditors.

NOW therefore or never, this Affair
is to be spoken to ; he that talks of Trade
and can omit THIS, either has no warm
Side, to the Publick Prosperity of Trade,
or does not understand it : He to whom
talking of a Thing thus necessary, and thus
sealowable, is a Burthen, and gives him no
Satisfaction, either does not value what the
Consequence of these things may be to the
Nation, or has no Notions of them ; in
short, he either wants concern for the ge-
neral Good, or wants a Sense of it.

To see a Nation like ours, that has Col-
onies Abroad of an immense Value, and
of the last Consequence to us in Trade,
and who cannot, in the Language of Trade
it may be said, they cannot subsist without
this Trade—— To see us stupidly En-
quiring, and with an Air of Negligence,
What is this Guinea Trade ? What is it to
us ? What need we Trouble our selves a-
bout it ? What signifies all this to us ? To
see the Dutch bring Home whole Cargoes

of Gold, Ivory, &c. so great I am a
sham'd to Name them ; and carry more
Negroes away, than they have Colonies to
receive ; by which they have them at half
Price in their Plantations, and by Conse-
quence carry their Sugars, and bring them
to Market Cheaper than we —— To
see us at the same time bring Home no-
thing but the Complaints of our Factors,
of their being Encroach'd upon by the
Dutch, insulted by the separate Traders,
and Starv'd and Neglected by the Compa-
ny, whose Hands are tied by our own Strife
and Madness, from supplying them ; while
our Negroes are by this Means, above three
times the Price at the Colonies, that the
Dutch sell theirs for, and twice the Price
the Company used to sell them at.

Really, Gentlemen Merchants and Traders of London, this is just as I have seen it, in this great Uncharitable City ; whose English Property it is to have no sense of any Misery, but what they feel ——
When one End of the Town has been on
Fire, and at the other no more stir or dis-
turbance about it, than if it were all in the
greatest Security and Safety imaginable —
and tell them the next Morning, of a Dread-
ful Fire that Night — O Lord, Sir, Where,
Where ! — Indeed I thought I heard
them talk of Fire somewhere, but I never
enquired where it was. Pray what Harm
has it done ?

Wonder no more that this Author Treats
you rudely, and calls you the most senselefs,
of all sensible Nations in the World —
As Juvenal says in another Case,

Si Natura negat, facit indignatio Versa.

Indignation will make a Man speak, in
spight of Nature, in spight of good Maners,
in spight of Patience, nay, in spight of
Dullness — To see a Nation foolishly
involv'd in Piques, and Quarrels, about
not carrying on a Trade, but destroying
it — To see People pull a Trade to
pieces, purely for the satisfaction of their
Passions, in pulling one another to pieces :
To see them resolve to lose a Trade, rather
than lose their Revenge ; and let go
the Golden-Gain of the Trade, rather
than the vile hopes of Ruining one another :

To

To see the *Dutch* come Home Freighted with Gold, Elephants Teeth, and the Rich Goods of the Country ; and ours come Laden with the Wretched Accounts of what they could do, if they had been supplied, and what they have lost for want of it.

Unless our Trading Senses are quite stupefied, and we are grown Lunatick in Merchandizing ; we cannot but be filled with Re-sentment at these Follies, and all Men as they open their Eyes, must see we are the blindest People in the World ; that destroy by our foolish and ill directed Contentions, that Trade, which set to Rights, would Employ both Sides ; and if they would come into just Measures, has Room enough, and Gain enough to satisfie all the Parties, United in one legal and wisely Estab-

lish'd Society ; and in whose Management, it might become one of the Greatest most Profitable, and most Flourishing Trades in the World.

How we are mock'd by our Neighbours for this ? How the *French* insult us, the *Portuguese* laugh at us, and the *Dutch* Encroach upon us for this : How they all gain by it ; but more especially the last take such Measures, as may, if not speedily Remedied, make it impossible to us to recover the Trade : I shall Enquire in its Course ————— And then if you will not see, you must remain blind to the end of the Chapter ; or do as generally we in *England* use to do, (*viz.*) Open your Eyes when 'tis too late, and you may as well keep them shut for ever.

MISCELLANEA.

I Have noted in my last, the influence the late Heats, and Feuds among us, have had upon our Credit ; and the blow that the sinking of our Credit has given to the Affairs Abroad ; and by this, some People may see their Folly, who for these several Months past have told us, That the Peace was certain, that her Majesty had the Terms in her own Hand ; that the *Dutch* were willing to make Peace with the *French*, if we would but agree to it ; that therefore it was in our Breasts, and we could make an end of the War, when ever we pleased.

From this Discourse, two or three Things were argued, relating to the present Times, 1. That we need not be in such Dread of the Changes at Court, or at the News, of the Dissolution of the Parliament ; as if these Things would Alarm our Allies and Confederates, and prompt them to look out, secure themselves, and make a separate Peace, as some People had reported : For, if her Majesty found it necessary to change her Servants, or her Parliament, or take any Measures which did not please

— All Dangers on that side might be Warded against, and kept off, by concluding the Peace ————— 2. That if the Party who talk'd so loud, and the *Whigs* who pretend to be Masters of so much Money, as to govern the Affairs of the Exchequer, the Funds, and Advancement of Money, upon the Credit of the Government, should pretend to run down the publick Credit ; her Majesty could put her self out of a Condition to want them, by Ending the War, signing the Peace with *France* ; and so with the Credit, remove the Occasion of Credit : And thus the Matter would stand upon as good a Foot, as it did before.

Now these Gentlemen, find themselves mistaken ————— It is true, the Queen had it in her Power to make Peace, when ever her Majesty pleased ; and the same Power still remains in her Majesty, that did before : But let us consider this Matter a little more nicely : Not to make a SAFE, a Lasting, and a SECURE Peace, is not to make Peace at all ————— Safe and Honourable, are the two great Articles of the Peace we must have, or we make no Peace at all.

It is no betraying the Weakness of this Nation, *so say*, we are in no better Condition, to begin a new War 20 Year hence, than we are to carry the present War on now : Our Funds do not Revive ; we take no Breath by a Peace of 20 Year ; our Customs, and Excises, our Taxes on Salt, Stamp-Paper, Windows, Coal, &c. are all Mortgaged for 99 Years, or 32 Years, and we can no way redeem those Mortgages, at least not the greatest Part ; so that if our Peace be not safe, 'tis no Peace at all.

This may serve for an Answer, to those who blame some People's Management, for not accepting the Terms the French offer'd ; and tell us they offer'd as much, as it was possible for them to perform, and that to offer what we knew they could not perform, was to know they design'd to Cheat us, and profess our selves willing to be Cheated.

But one thing may be answer'd, which I see no room to reply to — — — Tho' perhaps I am as forward to wish the Terms of France had been accepted, as another : Yet this cannot be charg'd to the Account of our Plenipotentiaries ; because even the Dutch, and all the other Allies, who have press'd most for a Peace, yet concurr'd in this, that the Terms now offer'd by France, were not a sufficient Security to the Allies, to Ground a Peace upon.

There is no question, but the Security for the delivering up the Spanish Monarchy, is a thing which concerns this Nation of Britain, more than any of the Allies ; because if it comes to a War, for the Recovery of Spain, the Weight of that War would lie more upon us, than upon any of the Confederates ; our concern in the Trade with Spain being greatest, and its Colonies in America being by far, the greatest of any ; and therefore 'tis more our Interest, to have those Dominions out of the

Hand of the House of Bourbon — — — If then they all agree, that the security offer'd is insufficient, and are rather willing to carry on the War with us, than to accept of these Securities ; the Opinion of our Plenipotentiaries is thereby infinitely Justified, and their Proceedings must appear just and dis-interested.

I must confess, I do not see us in any Condition for Peace, any more than we are for War ; but of that I shall speak by it self — — — It is apparent, it has not been in the Queens Hand to make A P E A C E, that is, A S A F E Peace, if the judgment of our Allies may be adher'd to — — — And if you ask me what I infer from it — — — My inference is very short and plain — — — Then we must carry on the War ; and this brings me Home to the Gentlemen I am talking to.

If we cannot obtain a safe Peace, we must carry on the War ; if we must carry on the War, we must keep up, and keep alive our National Credit, for we cannot carry on the War without it — — — And from the whole, I say, they that would destroy our Credit, would bring us into such a Condition, as we should neither be able to make Peace, or to carry on the War.

I shall proceed in my next to Enquire, (1.) How far a Party of People among us, really drive at destroying our National Credit. (2.) How we are unable to carry on the War, without Credit — — — (3.) How unable all the Projects, hitherto offer'd us by them, are, to support Credit — — — And lastly, What alone can keep Credit up, and enable us to carry on the War, to the Disappointment of the French — — — Who, it is evident, have broke off this Treaty, meerly upon a supposition, that our Divisions will ruin our Credit, and the loss of our Credit, will disable us from supporting the War.